

REMARKS

Applicants have received and carefully reviewed the Office Action of the Examiner mailed May 25, 2006. Claims 16 and 27-29 have been amended. Support for the amendments is found in the specification, claims, and drawings as originally filed. No new matter has been added. Claims 1, 3-17, and 19-29 remain pending. Reconsideration and reexamination are respectfully requested.

Allowed Claims

Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating that claims 1, 3-15, and 23-26 are allowed.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 16, 17, 19-22, and 27-29 are rejected as being unpatentable over Mashio et al. (US 2001/0025926 A1) in view of Hashimoto et al. (US 2003/0066967 A1).

Independent claims 16 and 27-29, as amended, recite, in part, the means for electronically processing signals has an area that is significantly smaller than the area of the means for sensing infrared light. Applicants submit that Mashio et al. do not appear to teach or suggest such an element. The Examiner asserts that Mashio et al. teach a sensing means including means for sensing infrared light (1), means for electronically processing signals (7), and means for supporting (2) on one level the means for sensing infrared light and means for electronically processing signals. The Examiner also asserts that Mashio et al. teach the means for electronically processing signals having an area that is a fraction of the area of the means for sensing infrared light. In support of this assertion, the Examiner states that a fraction by definition may include improper fractions. An improper fraction has a numerator that is greater than or equal to its denominator. By making such an assertion, it appears the Examiner is acknowledging that Mashio et al. teach a means for electronically processing signals having an area that is at least as great or larger than the area of the means for sensing infrared light. Mashio et al. thus do not teach or suggest the elements of independent claims 16 and 27-29, as amended. Hashimoto et al. do not appear to teach what Mashio et al. lack. Thus, a combination

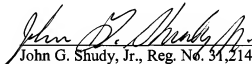
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of Mashio et al. and Hashimoto et al. also fails to teach or suggest the elements of independent claims 16 and 27-29, and the claims dependent thereon. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, all pending claims are believed to be in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and reexamination are respectfully requested. If a telephone interview would be of assistance, please contact the undersigned attorney at 612-677-9050.

Respectfully submitted,

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